



February 5, 2015

**Proposed Bill No. 303. AN ACT CONCERNING CHILDREN EXPOSED TO FAMILY VIOLENCE**

Dear Senator Bartolomeo, Representative Urban, and members of the Committee on Children:

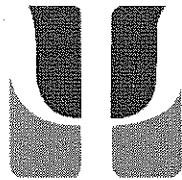
My name is Traci Cipriano, and I am writing as Director of Professional Affairs for the Connecticut Psychological Association (CPA), **in strong support of Proposed Bill No. 303.**

**Proposed Bill No. 303** seeks to establish a task force which will both: 1) review existing policies and procedures used to respond to, intervene and address exposure to family violence by minors; and, 2) develop proposals for a statewide, evidence-based model policy which will address both prevention and intervention strategies for assisting minors who are exposed to family violence.

Exposure to family violence takes a costly toll in many ways. In addition to the immediate psychological terror and potential physical harm to children and youth who are exposed to violence, there is also a greatly increased potential for long-term psychological and behavioral difficulties resulting from the trauma. Children exposed to family violence often have low self-esteem, mood and anxiety disorders, developmental and behavioral problems, as well as educational difficulties. In addition, when combined with other risk factors, children exposed to family violence are also at increased risk for later developing psychotic illnesses and substance abuse disorders. As adults, many repeat the cycle of violence, as victims or perpetrators, expanding the circle of influence.

A task force assigned to develop a model evidence-based policy, which can enable state agencies and professionals to begin to effectively address the cycle of violence through prevention strategies, as well as intervene in a quick, efficient, coordinated and productive manner when necessary, is an important first step in addressing the immediate and long-term mental health and well-being of Connecticut's children and youth.

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Thank you for your time and consideration.

*Traci Cipriano, PhD*

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Licensed Clinical Psychologist  
Director of Professional Affairs

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